

WOLF Radio, Inc.
401 W. Kirkpatrick St.
Syracuse, NY 13204
315-472-0222

July 30, 2004

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, SW, TW-A325
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: MM Docket No. 99-325

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On behalf of WOLF Radio, Inc. ("WRI") licensee of WOLF(AM), Syracuse, New York, the following comments are submitted in response to the Commission's Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in this proceeding and the recent Public Notice about AM nighttime service.

WOLF is an AM station currently broadcasting using iBiquity Digital Corporation's HD Radio™ system. WRI is pleased to have had the opportunity for WOLF to be the first AM station in New York State to implement a full stereo HD Radio system.

WRI strongly supports the FCC's efforts to develop final rules for digital service. WRI has been pleased with the results of the HD Radio system and the quality of the digital signal. We believe the improved audio quality of the digital AM signal has the potential to transform the listening public's views of AM radio and to significantly enhance AM radio's ability to compete with new forms of news, variety, and entertainment.

WRI has found that because it is not necessary to use forms of pre-emphasis of the audio signal, and due to the low background noise inherent in digital technology, many people who have listened to the digital broadcasts heard on WOLF believe that it sounds better than analog FM. As a music station, we had grown tired of hearing from our audience that AM has become known as a medium with poor fidelity, muffled sound, and static-prone. We look forward to audience acceptance of the new technology and the ability to make AM fidelity generally indistinguishable from FM.

At this early stage in the implementation of digital broadcasting, the FCC must continue its efforts to foster the digital conversion and without further delay. The FCC should authorize full digital nighttime operation for all AM stations. WRI recognizes there is potentially a greater risk of interference to existing analog signals from nighttime operation of the HD Radio system. However, any increased interference is likely to occur primarily at the edge of or outside a station's protected coverage area. WRI believes any impact on listeners in these areas will be greatly offset by the significant benefits HD Radio technology will offer the majority of listeners. Existing AM services are severely limited by the many impairments that affect analog broadcasts. HD Radio technology is the first viable solution to many of AM radio's problems and will ensure the continued long-term success of AM. As a result, WRI is willing to tolerate some increased interference in the short run to derive the full benefits of digital.

It will be difficult for stations to introduce new services or to encourage their listeners to convert to digital if AM broadcasts continue to exclude nighttime service. Our listeners expect a continuity of service. It will be difficult to convince listeners that digital is beneficial if those benefits disappear on a daily basis at sunset. WRI encourages the FCC to authorize, immediately and permanently, AM stations to commence digital broadcasts at night. To the extent that there are uncommon instances of harmful interference to adjacent stations, the FCC should encourage and permit stations to work together to resolve interference through creative approaches, including reductions in digital power in one or both sidebands if necessary. In the event that stations are not willing or able to resolve issues in a cooperative fashion, the FCC's existing complaint procedures can adequately address any unresolved matters. However, it is expected that this method of resolution would be the exception rather than the rule.

WRI also encourages the FCC to avoid undue regulation of the digital service. The FCC's Further Notice proposes many regulations for the digital service. At a minimum, the digital service should not be burdened with greater restrictions or more regulations than are already imposed on existing analog services. Flexibility, at this stage in the rollout of the technology, will allow broadcasters and equipment manufacturers to take fuller advantage of the many benefits offered by HD Radio technology. The FCC should structure its rules to encourage innovation absent evidence of interference to other users.

WRI appreciates the opportunity to offer its views on the Commission's proposals and encourages the FCC to expedite completion of its IBOC rules.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig L. Fox
President